

Future physicians more inclined to embrace genomic medicine than practicing physicians

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Medical students showed a greater acceptance of using approaches in genomic medicine, a key element in the practice of precision medicine, to treat patients as compared to physicians currently in practice according to a Brief Communication in the journal *Medical Science Educator*.

The promise of genomic medicine, where personalized prevention and treatment becomes the health care norm, is poised to become a widespread reality. "The ability to take advantage of this approach to patient care will rest heavily on having appropriately trained [physicians](#)," explained corresponding author Shoumita Dasgupta, PhD, associate professor of medicine and Director of Graduate Studies, Genetics and Genomics at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM). "Given the reluctance of current practicing physicians to embrace genomic medicine approaches, the significance of educational initiatives in genomic medicine among current [medical students](#) is of paramount importance."

The study involved the creation of a curriculum highlighting emerging approaches in genomic medicine and inclusion of a controversial case published in the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*. Medical students at BUSM were asked to consider the case of an asymptomatic patient interested in pursuing [genomic testing](#) to ascertain his cancer risk. Students overwhelmingly selected genomic medicine testing strategies whereas NEJM readers, primarily practicing physicians, were much more circumspect about these approaches.

According to Dasgupta if *NEJM* readers are representative of practicing physicians, this dramatic difference in desire to implement genomic medicine strategies suggests that future physicians are poised to embrace genomic approaches more readily than their practicing physician counterparts. "These findings suggest educational initiatives to expose students to concepts in genomic medicine may have a substantial impact on their readiness to adopt genomic medicine approaches and potentially their future clinical care recommendations. As educators, it becomes increasingly critical to train the next generation of physicians to apply genomic technologies and discoveries to their future clinical practices. These types of initiatives may ultimately facilitate more widespread adoption of [genomic medicine](#) approaches in the clinic, allowing us to more nimbly transition into an era of [precision medicine](#)," added Dasgupta.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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